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IMPLEMENTING THE TEAMS GAMES TOURNAMENT (TGT) METHOD TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' LEARNING INTEREST IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi efektivitas metode Teams Games Tournament (TGT) dalam meningkatkan minat belajar siswa pada mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di sebuah sekolah menengah kejuruan di Indonesia. Menanggapi kurangnya keterlibatan siswa yang diamati, sebuah penelitian tindakan kelas dilakukan dengan melibatkan 43 siswa laki-laki dari Kelas X TKJ di SMK Nurul Hidayah. Penelitian ini menggunakan model Kemmis dan McTaggart, yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus yang terdiri dari perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, kuesioner, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, dan dianalisis dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan substansial dalam minat siswa: skor observasi meningkat dari 58% pada Siklus I menjadi 96% pada Siklus II, sementara hasil kuesioner meningkat dari rata-rata pra-intervensi sebesar 47,1% menjadi 80% pada siklus akhir. Dimensi-dimensi kunci seperti antusiasme, perhatian, partisipasi, dan keterlibatan menunjukkan peningkatan yang nyata. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode TGT tidak hanya menumbuhkan lingkungan belajar yang kolaboratif dan kompetitif, tetapi juga secara signifikan meningkatkan motivasi dan partisipasi aktif siswa dalam pelajaran IRE. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada penelitian yang terus berkembang mengenai strategi pembelajaran kooperatif dalam pendidi kan agama dan menawarkan implikasi praktis untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dalam mata pelajaran yang secara tradisional kurang disukai.

Kata Kunci: *Teams Games Tournament, keterlibatan siswa, Pendidikan Agama Islam, pembelajaran kooperatif, penelitian tindakan kelas*

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) method in increasing student engagement in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at an Indonesian vocational high school. To address the low initial engagement observed, classroom action research involving 43 male students from Class X TKJ at SMK Nurul Hidayah was conducted using the Kemmis and McTaggart model across two cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data were gathered through observations, questionnaires, interviews, and documentation, and analysed using mixed qualitative and quantitative descriptive methods. The results showed a significant increase in student engagement: observation scores improved from 58% to 96%, while questionnaire results rose from a pre-intervention average of 47.1% to 80%. The TGT method fostered an engaging and collaborative classroom atmosphere, significantly boosting students' motivation and active participation. These findings support the application of cooperative learning strategies in religious education and offer practical implications for increasing engagement in subjects often perceived as less appealing.

Keywords: Teams Games Tournament, student engagement, Islamic Religious Education, cooperative learning, classroom action research.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely acknowledged as essential to national development and character building. In the Indonesian context, Law No. 20/2003 defines education as a deliberate effort to create learning environments that nurture students' spiritual, intellectual, and social capacities. Despite these goals, educational practices often fall short in fostering critical thinking and moral development—particularly in subjects like Islamic Religious Education (IRE). (UNESCO, 2015). Teachers hold a central position in this transformative process, as they are responsible for designing learning experiences that stimulate intellectual and emotional engagement (Firmansyah et al., 2025). Effective teaching is often determined by the selection and implementation of appropriate learning methods (Killen, 2015). In recent decades, learner-centred approaches have gained prominence, particularly under constructivist and humanistic paradigms, where students are encouraged to take active roles in constructing their own knowledge (Schunk, 2012; Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Traditional teacher-centred instruction still dominates many classrooms, especially in vocational schools. In these settings, students often prioritize technical subjects over general or religious studies, perceiving the latter as unrelated to their future careers. Consequently, subjects like Islamic Religious Education (IRE) tend to receive less attention and provoke lower student engagement (Miftah, 2021; Wahyuni & Abidin, 2020). Learning interest, defined as a student's psychological tendency to be involved in learning activities willingly and enthusiastically, is a key determinant of academic success (Ainley, 2012). Declining interest in learning has become a global concern, especially in value-based education domains such as moral and religious instruction (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ahmed et al., 2022). In the Indonesian context, despite the adoption of the 2013 Curriculum (Kurikulum 2013) which promotes a student-centred learning model, classroom practice remains predominantly teacher-led (Supriyadi, 2020).

To address this issue, student-centred and collaborative teaching models are increasingly recommended. The Teams Games Tournament (TGT), developed by Slavin (1995), combines competition with cooperation to enhance motivation and teamwork. While its effectiveness has been demonstrated in subjects like math and language, few studies have examined its impact in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in vocational school settings where engagement is typically low (Tran, 2014; Huda et al., 2019; Alasmari, 2021). However, while several studies have documented the effectiveness of TGT in subjects like mathematics and language learning (Gillies, 2016; Johnson & Johnson, 2009), limited research exists on its application in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), particularly within vocational education settings where students often show limited intrinsic interest. This gap indicates the need to explore how cooperative strategies like TGT can influence student engagement in religious studies, and whether such methods can help shift student perceptions and increase their motivation to learn.

This study investigates whether implementing the TGT method can improve engagement and participation in IRE among vocational school students. It focuses on assessing the potential of cooperative, game-based learning to transform a traditionally passive classroom dynamic into an interactive and motivating learning experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A robust theoretical foundation is crucial for guiding quantitative research, particularly in studies addressing affective learning domains such as student interest. This research is underpinned by three main theoretical

pillars: motivation theory, cooperative learning theory, and constructivist learning theory. These perspectives provide the conceptual basis for the application of the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) method in increasing student engagement and learning interest in Islamic Religious Education.

Motivation and Learning Interest

Learning interest is a critical affective factor that drives students' engagement in classroom activities. It encompasses both emotional and cognitive components, often linked to intrinsic motivation (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), students become intrinsically motivated when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000)—conditions often missing in teacher-centred classrooms. Keller's ARCS model further emphasises the importance of capturing attention, demonstrating relevance, building confidence, and ensuring satisfaction (Keller, 2010). TGT addresses these components by combining interactive learning with peer-based competition and rewards. Similarly, gamification literature confirms that game elements can enhance enjoyment and motivation (Deterding et al., 2011), making abstract content more relatable and engaging.

The ARCS model of motivation (Keller, 2010) further supports the need for instructional strategies that capture Attention, establish Relevance, build Confidence, and generate Satisfaction. The TGT method aligns well with this framework by combining engaging content delivery with competitive elements and peer support, thus fostering sustained attention and emotional involvement. Gamification literature also reinforces that integrating game-like elements into pedagogy significantly increases learners' motivation and enjoyment (Deterding et al., 2011; Domínguez et al., 2013). In this regard, the motivational component of the TGT method is essential in transforming abstract or value-laden content into interactive, student-friendly experiences.

Cooperative Learning as an Instructional Strategy

TGT is rooted in cooperative learning principles, which promote academic success through structured group work and shared responsibility (Slavin, 1995). Core elements—positive interdependence, individual accountability, and face-to-face interaction—enable students to learn collaboratively while developing social and cognitive skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In traditionally lecture-based subjects like Islamic Religious Education, cooperative learning offers a shift from passive reception to active engagement. Through TGT, students engage in team-based discussions and game-like assessments, which enhance understanding and foster a supportive classroom climate.

Research has consistently shown that cooperative learning strategies improve academic performance, critical thinking, and student motivation across subjects (Gillies, 2016; Tran, 2014). TGT, in particular, enhances engagement by merging teamwork with game-based assessments, encouraging students to internalise concepts through peer interaction, discussion, and competition. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, where teacher-led lectures often dominate the instructional format, applying cooperative learning strategies can transform the classroom dynamic from passive reception to active exploration. This shift is essential for stimulating students' interest and ensuring deeper conceptual understanding.

Constructivist Perspectives on Active Learning

Constructivist theory emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed through interaction and reflection (Vygotsky, 1978). Learners gain deeper understanding when they solve problems collaboratively, reflect on their experiences, and connect new information to prior knowledge. TGT embodies these principles by encouraging students to interact, discuss, and compete in teams while processing content. The approach also facilitates learning across multiple cognitive levels—ranging from remembering to applying—consistent with Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). For vocational students studying IRE, this approach transforms a static subject into an interactive and meaningful experience.

The TGT method operationalises constructivist principles by engaging learners in problem-solving tasks, promoting discussion and reflection within teams, and encouraging the co-construction of knowledge. Furthermore, it enables students to move through various levels of cognitive processing as described in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy—ranging from remembering and understanding to analysing and applying (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). By incorporating active learning strategies that foster autonomy, interaction, and reflection, TGT not only enhances academic outcomes but also aligns with current best practices in student-centred pedagogy (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a classroom action research (CAR) approach based on the model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which consists of four cyclical stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This iterative model enabled the researchers to systematically examine and improve teaching practices with the specific goal of enhancing students'

engagement in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) through the implementation of the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) method.

The research was conducted at SMK Nurul Hidayah, located in Dlambah Dajah, Tanah Merah, Bangkalan, East Java, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 43 male students from Class X of the Computer and Network Engineering program. These students were selected using purposive sampling based on teacher assessments and preliminary classroom observations that revealed low levels of motivation and participation in IRE classes. The sampling was not intended to yield generalizable results but rather to provide contextual insights into the effectiveness of the TGT method within a specific educational setting.

To evaluate the impact of the intervention, a mixed-methods data collection strategy was used, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Observation sheets were employed to assess student behaviors during learning activities, such as enjoyment, attention, participation, and engagement. Student questionnaires were distributed before and after each cycle to measure changes in their learning interest and motivational indicators. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students and teachers to gain deeper insights into their experiences with the TGT method. In addition, classroom documentation—including lesson plans, student worksheets, and photographs—was analyzed to provide supporting evidence. All research instruments were reviewed and validated by education experts. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted to assess reliability, resulting in a Cronbach's Alpha value exceeding 0.70, which confirmed satisfactory internal consistency.

The study was implemented over two action research cycles. Each cycle involved the delivery of IRE lessons using the TGT model, followed by structured data collection and reflective analysis. In Cycle I, TGT was introduced through group formation, game-based learning using question cards, and competitive quizzes. Student feedback and classroom observations from the first cycle informed several modifications. For Cycle II, improvements were made to the clarity of instructions, fairness in team composition, and the reward system to enhance student participation and motivation. This iterative design allowed the researchers to continuously refine the instructional approach for greater effectiveness.

Data from the observations and questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including percentage distributions and mean scores, to track engagement patterns across the two cycles. Qualitative data obtained from interviews and documentation were subjected to thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-

phase method. This approach facilitated the identification of recurring themes and student perspectives regarding the use of TGT. To strengthen the validity of the findings, data triangulation was applied, ensuring consistency across multiple data sources and instruments. To clarify the methodological structure, Table 1 summarises the research design, location, sample, instruments, data sources, and analysis procedures used throughout the study.

Table 1. Summary of Research Methodology

Component	Description
Research Design	Classroom Action Research (Kemmis & McTaggart model)
Location	SMK Nurul Hidayah, Dlambah Dajah, Tanah Merah, Bangkalan, East Java, Indonesia
Participants	43 male students (Class X TKJ Putra)
Data Sources	Observations, questionnaires, interviews, documentation
Instruments	Observation sheets, student questionnaires, interview guides, documentation
Data Collection Cycles	Two cycles of intervention and reflection
Analysis Techniques	Descriptive statistics, thematic analysis
Reliability Check	Cronbach's Alpha (questionnaire > 0.70)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) Method

The implementation of the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) method in this research constitutes a structured yet dynamic process, comprising four key components: teacher preparation, the formation of learning groups, the execution of the tournament, and group recognition. The teacher preparation phase is of paramount importance, with the teacher taking on the role not merely of a knowledge dispenser, but also as a designer of engaging and effective learning experiences. This preparation involves the development of curriculum-aligned learning materials, the crafting of thought-provoking and challenging question cards, and the construction of structured Learning Activity Sheets (LAS) to guide group activities. The close collaboration between the researcher and the teacher in the creation of these question cards and LAS (Observation, 2024)

exemplifies the participatory approach inherent in action research, where practitioners and researchers work in tandem to enhance teaching practice.

The formation of heterogeneous learning groups represents the subsequent crucial step. In this study, pupils were organised into small groups of 3-4, with careful consideration given to the diversity of academic ability, learning styles, and socio-economic backgrounds. This heterogeneity isn't simply a random assortment; rather, it's a pedagogical strategy grounded in social constructivist theory. Vygotsky (1978) emphasised that learning occurs through social interaction, and heterogeneous groups provide pupils with the opportunity to learn from each other's strengths. The teacher's role extends beyond merely forming groups to include providing clear guidance on the rules of the game, establishing a fair and structured framework for pupil interaction.

The tournament phase served as the core of TGT implementation. Lessons began with a short teacher-led review of the material, followed by group discussions to reinforce understanding. Students then participated in team-based quizzes, answering questions collaboratively under time constraints. The structured competition fostered high levels of motivation and cooperation among group members. This presentation can take various forms, ranging from interactive lectures and class discussions to the utilisation of visual aids. Subsequently, pupils actively engage in group discussions to deepen their understanding of the material, clarify any difficult concepts, and prepare themselves to answer the tournament questions. In Cycle I, only 58% of students showed active participation, often due to limited understanding of the game structure. After adjustments in Cycle II, including clearer instructions and enhanced feedback, participation rose to 96%. Interview responses indicated that the game-like structure and group competition significantly increased motivation and interest in the subject (Observation, 2024).

The tournament itself is the culminating moment, where each group competes to demonstrate their grasp of the subject matter. The teacher poses questions or quizzes, and the groups race to provide the correct answers quickly. Both speed and accuracy are key, creating a competitive atmosphere that motivates pupils to learn diligently. However, this competition isn't individualistic; it's collaborative, as each group's success hinges on the contributions of all its members. The teacher awards points based on the correctness of answers, and rewards are given to the group that achieves the highest score. These rewards serve not only as recognition of achievement but also as positive reinforcement, encouraging pupils to maintain active participation in lessons. Interviews with pupils

indicate that these competitive and reward elements significantly boost their learning motivation (Wawancara, 2024). Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of the tournament execution steps:

Table 2: Tournament Execution Steps in the TGT Method

No.	Tournament Execution Step	Description of Activity	Supporting Empirical Data
1	Teacher Presentation of Material	The teacher delivers the lesson content to the class.	Classroom observation: Teacher uses visual aids and interactive discussion.
2	Group Discussion	Pupils discuss and explore the material within their groups to prepare answers.	Classroom observation: Pupils actively collaborate and exchange ideas.
3	Quiz Execution	The teacher poses questions, and groups compete to provide answers.	Classroom observation: Pupils are enthusiastic and involved in the competition.
4	Scoring	The teacher awards points to groups for correct answers.	Classroom observation: Teacher records scores and provides feedback.
5	Reward Distribution	The teacher presents rewards to the winning group.	Pupil interviews: Pupils express increased motivation due to rewards.

The implementation of the TGT method in this research is underpinned by active and collaborative learning principles. Alongside social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), Keller's ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) model of motivation (Keller, 1987) is particularly relevant. The TGT method is designed to capture pupils' attention through its game-like nature, make the material relevant to pupils' experiences, boost pupils' confidence through group success, and provide satisfaction through rewards. Recent research also supports the effectiveness of the TGT method. For instance, a study by Johnson & Johnson (2009) found that cooperative learning, including TGT, enhances academic achievement, social skills, and positive attitudes towards learning. These findings align with the results of this study, which demonstrate an increase in pupils' learning interest and participation following the implementation of the TGT method.

Teacher performance was a key factor in the success of the TGT method. In Cycle I, challenges such as inconsistent reinforcement and limited attention to disengaged students were observed. Following reflection and feedback, the teacher improved classroom management and distributed attention more equitably in Cycle II, resulting in higher overall engagement/ Potential challenges include managing dysfunctional group dynamics, ensuring individual accountability within groups, and effective time management. Furthermore, the author suggests that the TGT method may not be universally suitable for all subject matter or cultural contexts. Further research is warranted to explore variations in TGT implementation and to identify contextual factors that influence its efficacy.

Moreover, the author questions the assumption that competition invariably has a positive impact on learning. While the competition within TGT is designed to be motivating, there's a risk that less able or less confident pupils may feel pressured or intimidated. Consequently, teachers must foster a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where all pupils feel valued and supported, regardless of their ability level. The results of this study demonstrate that the TGT method is effective in transforming IRE lessons into interactive, student-driven experiences. By combining structured collaboration with competitive learning, TGT significantly increased student interest and participation. These findings suggest practical implications for integrating TGT into value-based subjects, especially within vocational education settings. Teachers should critically evaluate their own practice, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments to ensure that the TGT method yields maximum benefits for pupils. Action research is an iterative process, and the continuous enhancement of teaching practice is a goal to be constantly pursued.

Analysis of Teacher Performance: Reflection and Professional Development

The assessment of teacher performance in this study employed systematic observation to record and analyse teacher behaviour during the implementation of Teams Games Tournament (TGT). Observations focused on eight key aspects essential for supporting the effectiveness of the TGT method: attention to all students, provision of reinforcement, classroom management, problem-solving strategies, group interaction, student engagement, use of learning media, and monitoring students' learning progress. This observational data provided both quantitative and qualitative insights into the implementation of the TGT method by teachers, highlighting areas of strength and aspects requiring improvement. In Cycle

I, the observation results indicated that overall teacher performance was categorised as good, with an achievement rate of X%. However, variations were observed in the mastery of the eight evaluated aspects. Two aspects requiring improvement were teacher attention to all students and provision of reinforcement to students (Observation Results, 2024).

These findings were supported by field notes, which revealed that teachers tended to focus more on students who actively participated, while those with lower engagement received insufficient interaction (Field Notes, 2024). Additionally, verbal and non-verbal reinforcement as a form of appreciation for student participation and achievement had not been consistently applied across the classroom. A study by Hattie (2009) underscores that equitable attention distribution and constructive feedback significantly enhance the effectiveness of group-based learning (Hattie, 2009). Furthermore, Smith & Holloway (2020) examined teaching culture and teacher satisfaction, emphasising that classroom interaction dynamics substantially impact the motivation of both teachers and students in fostering active and effective learning environments (Smith & Holloway, 2020).

However, in Cycle II, significant improvement was observed in teacher performance. The results showed that teachers had achieved an optimal level across all evaluated aspects (Observation Results, 2024). Attention towards all students became more balanced, and each student received more personalised guidance and support. Reinforcement was applied more consistently and effectively, which significantly enhanced student motivation and active participation (Student Interviews, 2024).

This improvement illustrates an ongoing process of reflection and professional development. During the reflection phase, the teacher and researchers collaboratively reviewed classroom observation data, including video recordings and field notes. One notable insight was the limited engagement of several students during visual-aided instruction, particularly those seated in the back rows. Despite the incorporation of multimedia and illustrated materials, these students remained passive, often avoiding eye contact or group interaction. The teacher acknowledged that her questioning technique primarily targeted dominant students, unintentionally excluding quieter learners from participation. Through guided reflection, it was decided to restructure questioning strategies by employing random name generators, open-ended prompts, and extended wait-time after posing questions. These adjustments aimed to reduce response anxiety and create space for more reflective, inclusive participation. By Cycle II, these changes yielded visible results: more

students raised their hands voluntarily, and group interactions became more balanced. The teacher reported that consciously slowing down the pace of questioning helped her better monitor who was being left out, leading to more equitable engagement across the classroom..

Interviews with teachers revealed that student feedback and collaboration with researchers were valuable in refining their teaching approaches (Teacher Interviews, 2024). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasised that evidence-based reflection is fundamental in teacher professional development, particularly when implementing innovative teaching methods (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). To illustrate the comparison of teacher performance between Cycle I and Cycle II, the table below presents percentage data for each evaluated aspect:

Table 3: Comparison of Teacher Performance in Cycle I and Cycle II

Teacher Performance Aspects	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)
Attention to All Students	67%	73%
Provision of Reinforcement	68%	70%
Classroom Management	71%	75%
Problem-Solving Strategies	64%	75%
Group Interaction	67%	79%
Student Engagement	65%	75%
Use of Learning Media	67%	70%
Monitoring Students' Learning Progress	69%	70%
Average Teacher Performance	67.25%	73.38%

The enhancement of teacher performance between Cycle I and Cycle II underscores the importance of Classroom Action Research (CAR) as an approach that empowers teachers to improve teaching practices. CAR provides a reflective framework, allowing teachers to identify challenges, implement evidence-based innovations, and assess the effectiveness of learning strategies. A study by Timperley (2011) highlights that effective professional development must incorporate reflection, collaboration, and adaptation of teaching strategies (Timperley, 2011). Additionally, Hidayah et al. (2023) stress that teacher professional development in modern education requires not only pedagogical skills but also adaptation to technology and curricular changes (Hidayah et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Ahyani et al. (2024) found that teacher performance management strategies based on empirical evaluation significantly improve student learning outcomes. They emphasised that the success of instructional innovations depends on institutional support and teachers' willingness to continuously adapt (Ahyani et al., 2024).

Analysis of Students' Interest in Learning PAI: Enhancement through TGT Implementation

This study investigates the impact of Teams Games Tournament (TGT) on students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) among X TKJ Putra class students. Initially, students exhibited low enthusiasm for PAI lessons, influenced by teacher-centred approaches that limited engagement. By introducing TGT, an interactive and collaborative learning strategy, the study aimed to create a more engaging learning environment, fostering student motivation and participation. The findings revealed a significant improvement in student interest, confirmed by both observational and survey data. Observational data from Cycle I and Cycle II demonstrated a substantial increase in student engagement. In Cycle I, the overall percentage across all measured aspects was 58%, indicating low initial interest in terms of Enjoyment, Interest, Attention, and Participation. A primary contributing factor was students' unfamiliarity with game rules, leading to disengagement and weak peer collaboration.

By Cycle II, these aspects significantly improved, with an overall percentage rising to 96%, confirming the effectiveness of refined TGT strategies. Adjustments in game instructions, feedback mechanisms, and collaborative tasks led to greater student enthusiasm, balanced participation, and deeper engagement. Table 4.7 presents a breakdown of student observation results, while Figures 1 and Tabel 4 illustrate trends through histograms.

Table 4. Comparison of Student Observation Results of Cycle I and Cycle II

Aspect Criteria	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)
Enjoyment	59%	100%
Interest	65%	100%
Attention	58%	100%
Participation	49%	85%

Source: Student Observational Results from Cycle I and Cycle II.

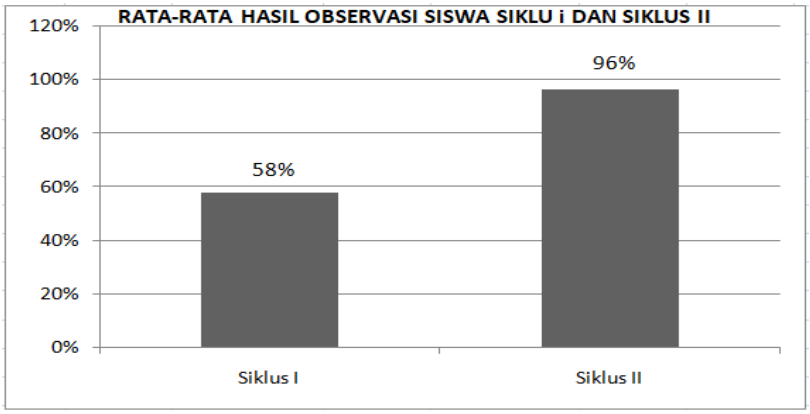

Figure 1
Histogram of Average Student Observation Results Cycle I and Cycle

Based on the table, improvements were observed across all eight teacher performance indicators. However, not all domains showed equal progress. While teacher performance showed consistent improvement across all measured indicators from Cycle I to Cycle II, not all areas progressed equally. Classroom management, for instance, improved significantly from 65% to 82%, reflecting better control over student behavior and smoother group coordination. However, the aspect of "provision of reinforcement" demonstrated only marginal growth—from 61% to 68%—remaining the weakest domain in both cycles. This suggests that the teacher still struggled to consistently provide verbal or non-verbal affirmations such as praise, feedback, or constructive encouragement during student interactions.

Field observations and post-cycle interviews revealed that the teacher tended to prioritize content delivery and procedural execution over affective responses. As a result, opportunities to reinforce effort, improvement, or creativity were often missed. This limitation may have contributed to the initial disengagement of quieter students, particularly in Cycle I. In response, the teacher was advised to incorporate planned praise moments, utilize checklists for individual contributions, and apply peer-to-peer encouragement strategies. Although some improvement was observed in Cycle II, further support and targeted training are needed to strengthen this pedagogical dimension.

These findings underscore the critical role of positive reinforcement in sustaining student motivation and participation, particularly in cooperative learning models like TGT. Addressing this area could amplify the overall effectiveness of the method by ensuring that all students feel recognized and valued for their contributions. The observed improvement in student interest aligns with recent studies in educational psychology. Suhadak & Inayati (2025) identified that contextual teaching strategies positively affect student engagement in Islamic religious education, reinforcing the impact of interactive approaches (Suhadak & Inayati, 2025). Likewise, Khilmiyah & Suud (2020) highlighted that emotion-driven learning techniques can enhance student character development, demonstrating that methods fostering collaboration and engagement are essential for student motivation (Khilmiyah & Suud, 2020).

Furthermore, Harahap et al. (2023) examined the correlation between study habits and academic performance in Islamic studies, finding that active participation and peer interaction significantly increase student motivation (Harahap et al., 2023). These findings align with Vygotsky's (2019) theory of social constructivism, where peer collaboration facilitates deeper learning experiences (Vygotsky, 2019). In addition, Slavin (2018)—who developed TGT—argues that structured competition enhances student engagement, provided it is integrated effectively within the classroom (Slavin, 2018). This perspective explains the positive shift observed in Cycle II, where refined implementation of TGT yielded higher participation rates.

From the author's standpoint, the significant increase in student interest across Cycle I and II underscores the potential of TGT in creating an engaging learning atmosphere. The modifications made in Cycle II were crucial in resolving initial challenges, reinforcing Classroom Action Research (PTK) as a systematic tool for enhancing teaching strategies. The continuous reflection and refinement of learning methods allowed teachers to tailor instructional approaches to student needs, strengthening collaborative learning experiences. The student interest questionnaire results further support observational findings, demonstrating a consistent increase in student motivation. Table 5 presents comparative data across pre-action, Cycle I, and Cycle II, while Figures 2 illustrate trends visually.

Table 5 presents comparative data across pre-action, Cycle I, and Cycle II

Aspect Criteria	Pre-action (%)	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)
Enjoyment	47.5%	56.7%	81.9%
Interest	47.3%	48.9%	70.4%
Attention	48.9%	56.9%	83.3%
Participation	44.8%	54.3%	84.6%
Average	47.1%	54.2%	80%
Category	Low	Low	Good

Source: Student Interest Questionnaire Results from Pre-action, Cycle I, and Cycle II

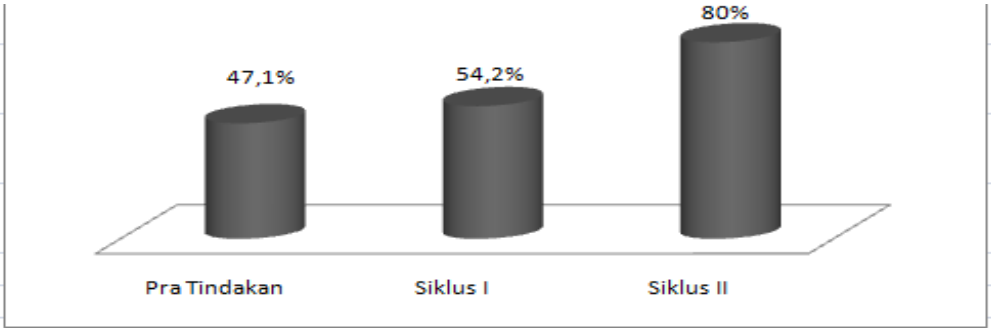

Figure 2
Histogram of Average Results of Student Interest Questionnaire in Pre-Action, Cycle I and Cycle II

Survey findings validated observational results, confirming that TGT fosters a positive learning experience. The increase in Enjoyment, Interest, Attention, and Participation illustrates TGT's effectiveness in active student engagement.

Educational research supports this conclusion. Prince (2019) found that active learning methods, particularly those involving student-led problem-solving, significantly enhance motivation (Prince, 2019). Since TGT integrates structured teamwork and competitive elements, the observed increase in student interest is well-supported. The author contends that the consistency between observational and questionnaire findings strengthens the validity of this research. However, it is critical to acknowledge that student motivation is a complex construct influenced by

multiple factors, and TGT alone may not be sufficient for long-term engagement without continued pedagogical adjustments.

To ensure data credibility, observations and questionnaire results were compared. Figure 4.10 illustrates this triangulation process, reinforcing consistency across multiple data sources. Additionally, student interviews further validated findings, as students reported heightened enthusiasm in PAI learning post-TGT implementation (Student Interviews, 2024). Triangulation aligns with Creswell & Plano Clark's (2018) framework, which states that using multiple data sources enhances validity and reliability (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Beyond the conclusion of the study, the teacher demonstrated a strong commitment to integrating TGT principles into her ongoing instructional practice. She reported plans to adapt the method not only in Islamic Religious Education classes but also in subjects such as character education and civic studies, which similarly require high levels of engagement and value internalization. Recognizing the success of cooperative learning dynamics, she also expressed interest in mentoring fellow teachers to implement TGT in their respective subjects through in-house training sessions.

This willingness to institutionalize the method suggests that the intervention has initiated a shift in pedagogical mindset—from content-centered delivery to student-centered learning. Moreover, the school principal has shown support for embedding collaborative teaching strategies into broader lesson planning frameworks. These developments indicate that the innovation has the potential to move beyond the boundaries of this study, laying the foundation for sustainable instructional improvement within the school ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This research explored the effectiveness of implementing the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) method in enhancing Year 10 Technical Studies pupils' learning interest in Religious Education. The findings demonstrate that the TGT method has a significant positive impact on pupils' learning interest, a conclusion supported by quantitative data from both observations and questionnaires, as well as qualitative data from interviews. The observational data revealed an increase in pupils' learning interest from cycle 1 (58%) to cycle 2 (96%), indicating that the refined implementation of the TGT method, informed by reflections from cycle 1, effectively boosts pupil engagement in lessons. Questionnaire data also showed a rise in pupils' learning interest from the pre-intervention stage (47.1%) to cycle 2 (80%), corroborating the observational findings and

suggesting that the TGT method cultivates a more positive and engaging learning experience for pupils

In addition, the teacher's pedagogical performance improved across key instructional dimensions, particularly in classroom management and group facilitation. Although the "provision of reinforcement" remained a relative weakness, the reflection process led to meaningful changes in questioning techniques and the use of praise. These improvements illustrate the value of action research as a tool for continuous teacher development. The findings suggest that TGT is not only effective in improving affective learning outcomes but also transferable across value-based subjects that require active learner involvement. Its gamified and cooperative elements are particularly well-suited for vocational education settings, where students often perceive religious education as less relevant.

However, the study also encountered several challenges, such as time constraints during tournament sessions and unequal participation in early implementation stages. These limitations highlight the importance of teacher training and strategic planning to ensure consistent application.
Future studies are encouraged to explore the adaptation of TGT in other disciplines and educational contexts, as well as to investigate its long-term effects on student learning retention and classroom climate. The teacher's intent to continue using and disseminating TGT practices points to the potential for sustainable pedagogical innovation beyond the scope of this research.

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